

# Brownfields

## Success Story

### A Renovated Building Gets Back to Its Roots

*Roanoke, Virginia*

Constructed in the grand art deco motifs popular in American architecture at the time, the Ponce de Leon Hotel opened in downtown Roanoke, Virginia in 1931. Built near Lick Run Spring, which supplied trout served at the hotel restaurant, the Ponce de Leon remained open for 40 years.

In 1971, new owners repurposed and renovated the property into an office building. The newly named Crystal Tower Building was headquarters to a community action agency that offered education and training to low-income residents in the city. In the years before the agency vacated the space in 2011, it became clear the site would soon undergo another major change.

### The Assessment and Renovations

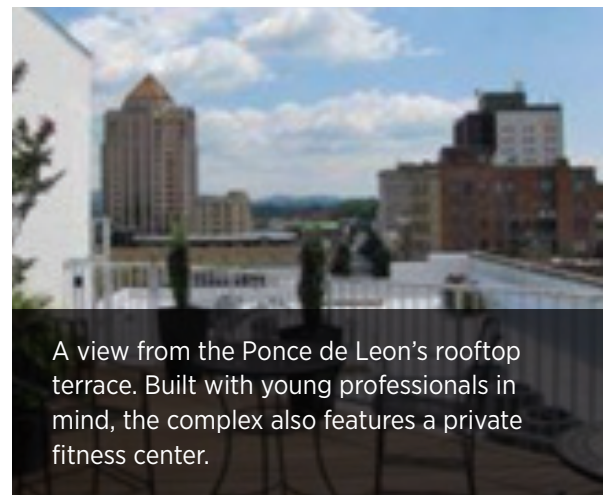
In 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the City of Roanoke a \$200,000 Brownfield Assessment Grant to help cover a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment of the property. The assessment revealed no major environmental hazards, clearing the way for renovations.

In 2012, a new owner purchased the property and spent \$10 million to convert the building into a mixed-use residential and commercial complex, uncovering and reimagining many of its classic features.

### The Benefits

By funding assessments that led the way to redevelopment, EPA helped launch an effort to revitalize downtown Roanoke, with the Ponce de Leon at the forefront. Aimed at attracting young professionals, the building reopened in 2014, featuring 90 apartments for rent, a private fitness center, a rooftop terrace and approximately 8,800 square feet of commercial space.

By mixing residential, office, retail and food service space, the Ponce de Leon now encourages neighbors to come together and interact as a community.



A view from the Ponce de Leon's rooftop terrace. Built with young professionals in mind, the complex also features a private fitness center.

**EPA Grant Recipient:**  
City of Roanoke, Virginia

**EPA Grant Type:**  
Brownfield Assessment

**Former Uses:** Hotel, Office Building

**Current Uses:** Mixed-Use Residential and Commercial Space

“ This project is a prime example of what a redevelopment can do to help revitalize a downtown area. ”

*Felicia Fred,  
EPA Region 3 Project Officer*

### For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at [www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields) or contact Felicia Fred at [Fred.Felicia@epa.gov](mailto:Fred.Felicia@epa.gov).